

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of selling federated telephony access services with the assistance of associates, the federated telephony access services accessible to users of a merchant web site which provides services for allowing users to electronically lease
5 telephony access connectivity, the method comprising:

enrolling a plurality of associates using an on-line registration system, whereby each said associate supplies at least one parameter describing local connectivity of a telephony gateway supplied by said associate, and whereby said telephony gateway links an Internet protocol (IP) network to a public switched telephone network (PSTN);

10 receiving from a remote client a request for a telephony connection with a specified telephony endpoint;

performing a database translation to correlate said telephony endpoint with a destination network, said database translation producing one or more results;

15 selectively establishing said telephony connection by one of an IP telephony packet network and said PSTN, said selection being based upon at least one said results;

when said destination network involves said PSTN,

(i) selecting an associate gateway by correlating at least one of said results with said at least one parameter, such that when the result of said correlation indicates the telephony gateway best suited to
20 provide access to said destination; and

(ii) paying a fee to said associate for supplying said telephony gateway service.

2. The method of Claim 1 whereby said remote client is a SIP server.

3. The method of Claim 1 whereby said method is practiced by an enhanced
2 SIP server.

4. The method of Claim 1 whereby said remote client is an IP telephony user
2 who's control signals are generated by a signaling system number seven call
3 establishment server.

5. The method of Claim 1 whereby said telephony gateway causes a wireless
2 call to be directed to said endpoint.

1 6. The method of Claim 1 whereby said web site uses a programmatic
2 interface to allow a new gateway system to be registered as an associated gateway, said
3 programmatic interface using computer-to-computer transactions to register said gateway
4 as an associated gateway.

1 7. The method of Claim 1 whereby said web site uses a user interface form to
2 allow a new gateway system to be registered as an associated gateway.

1 8. The method of Claim 1 whereby said associates comprise individual
2 entepenures who install a gateway to provide a local gateway service.

1 9. The method of Claim 1 whereby said parameter comprises a country code
2 and/or an area code associated with said PSTN local to said gateway.

1 10. The method of Claim 1 whereby said parameter comprises a set of global
2 positioning system (GPS) coordinates that define the geographical position of said
3 gateway.

1 11. The method of Claim 1 whereby said parameter comprises a selection of a
2 geographical position associated with said gateway, said selection being made from a user
3 interface form.

1 12. A method of selling federated telephony access services with the
2 assistance of associates, the federated telephony access services accessible to users of a
3 merchant web site which provides services for allowing users to electronically lease
4 telephony access connectivity, the method comprising:

5 enrolling a plurality of associates using an on-line registration system, whereby
6 each said associate supplies at least one parameter describing local connectivity of a
7 telephony gateway supplied by said associate, and whereby said telephony gateway links
8 an Internet protocol (IP) network to a public switched telephone network (PSTN);

9 receiving a request to place a call to an endpoint located within said PSTN local to
10 said gateway;

11 causing a hybrid IP-telephony and PSTN connection to be established between at
12 least one caller and said endpoint via said gateway;

13 paying a fee to said associate for supplying said telephony gateway service.

1 13. The method of Claim 12, further comprising:

2 charging a second fee to said caller for establishing said hybrid connection.

1 14. The method of Claim 13 whereby said second fee is based on a fixed
2 connection fee plus a fee charged by said PSTN local to said gateway.

1 15. The method of Claim 12 further comprising:
2 automatically placing a sequence of one or more test calls to verify operation of
3 said gateway.

1 16. The method of Claim 12 further comprising:
2 monitoring a set of quality of service statistics associated with said gateway; and
3 adjusting said fee paid to said associate based upon said statistics.

1 17. The method of Claim 12 further comprising:
2 monitoring a set of quality of service statistics associated with said gateway; and
3 ceasing to route calls to said associate when said statistics indicate that said
4 quality of service is below a threshold.

1 18. The method of Claim 12 whereby at least one of said associates is a small
2 business that supplies a gateway for a single locality.

1 19. The method of Claim 18 whereby at least one of said gateway comprises a
2 T1 connection and a DSL connection.

1 20. A method of selling federated telephony access services with the
2 assistance of associates, the federated telephony access services accessible to users of a
3 merchant web site which provides to users telephony access connectivity, the method
4 comprising:

5 enrolling a plurality of associates using an on-line registration system, whereby
6 each said associate supplies at least one parameter describing local connectivity of one or
7 more telephony gateways supplied by said associate, and whereby said telephony
8 gateways link an Internet protocol (IP) network to one or more public switched telephone
9 networks (PSTN's);

10 allocating to a given associate a set of subscriber accounts, whereby the number of
11 accounts in said set is related to the capacity of the one or more gateways provided by
12 said associate;

